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ABSTRACT

A form of individualized instruction called "managed" learning is proposed. Three personnel types would be required in such a system: (1) coordinators responsible for providing some education to assigned students and "managing" the rest of the student's education; (2) general service personnel such as guidance, library, audio-visual, instructional resource, and administrative personnel; and (3) specialists to provide educational experiences to students at the request of the student's coordinator. Generally, coordinators would be responsible for laying out a student's educational program in accord with the student's objectives. Learning experiences could be obtained in a multi-modal manner including radio, TV, video-tape, readings, and independent study. Such experiences would not have to be restricted to the campus. The concept of managed learning would demand a separate program for each student, taking into account the objectives of the student and the knowledge and skills already possessed by the student. While a number of problems are readily apparent with this proposal, it is believed that the details could be successfully worked out by ingenious and dedicated college personnel. Failing that, this model might be appropriate for use in the area of electives. (JDS)

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"MANAGED" LEARNING

by Herbert E. Phillips

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"MANAGED" LEARNING

All over this land concerned educators seek that elusive "better way" to teach.

Some of the methods being tried or mentioned are the ungraded college, the 4-1-4 calendar, the Emory four-day week, audio-tutorial instruction, New College's "contract" system, the co-op approach, smaller units of instruction with specified behaviors, non-punitive grading, and several others going all the way back to Mark Hopkins on one end of the log. May we add a concept we are calling "managed" education?

This idea was conceived before the author read the speech made at Clarion College by then Pennsylvania State University President Eric Walker. However, it is now difficult to distinguish as to whose ideas are whose. Dr. Mildred Bain's request for a "variable length of time and a more fixed product" entered very strongly into consideration of this concept.

It reached fruition when the Lake City Community College held a faculty seminar with Dr. Arthur Rosenberg. As educational ideas were discussed, it came like a flash -- why not schedule students to teachers, not to courses? From this evolved the ideas described in the remainder of this paper.

Under a plan of "managed education" professional personnel serving students might be of three classifications:

1. Coordinators who would be responsible for providing some education and for "managing" the rest.
2. General service personnel; such as, guidance, audio-visual, instructional resources, library, administration.
3. Specialists who would provide educational experiences which the coordinators would request for their counselees.

The general procedure to initiate this concept could be as follows:

1. List all the resource knowledges of the coordinators -- a "skills bank," so to speak.
2. The students will choose coordinators or be assigned in line with the student's educational objective. This, however, should not inhibit a change in goals.
3. The coordinator will assume the responsibility for laying out a student's educational program. This would require a complete student profile, made on the basis of extensive studying, testing, and interviewing.
4. The coordinator would teach or arrange for learning experiences for each student in the group. Learning experiences may also be presentations by anyone on campus or in the community, radio, TV, tape, video tape, readings, on-job experiences, independent study, programs of learning, or any other available.
5. The "manager" or coordinator would decide when the student is ready to go to a job or to another educational institution after consultation with the student during the student's time at the college.

Adoption of this concept would call for the abandonment of the single core program and semester hour requirements and demand satisfactory learning experiences at home, high school, and/or college in order to create a well-rounded, well-educated person.

This concept would demand a separate program for each and every individual at the college. This would be true academic advising because it would take into account the student's objectives and knowledge and skills which he has already acquired.

Under this concept a team of administrators and counselors would select a "coordinator" for each 40 students (or other number as participants learn more from experience and testing). This coordinator would be responsible for teaching as many things as he is capable of teaching to the students and also arranging for them to have learning experiences with specialists or with another coordinator having expertise in a field different than his. It is probable that a community college would need specialists in such areas as business and economics, in English, in foreign language, in three of the humanities, in math and science, the social studies as well as each area of occupational training areas. These coordinators and specialists would be served by personnel in general services -- guidance, audio-visual, instructional resources, and library, and possibly an administrator to coordinate the whole thing. Now, under this idea a college would list all the resource capabilities or coordinators.

The coordinator teaches or arranges for appropriate educational experiences for each student in his group. Experiences may be

presentations by anyone on campus, in the community, or from outside, by radio, TV, tape, video tape, conference call, or reading. One thing would be to turn over to specialists certain parts of this. In other words, the coordinator would be the educational manager for each of a unit of students. It would be he who, in conference with the students and on the basis of tests, would say when the student had reached the student's educational objective.

This would require that a college recruit three different kinds of people for faculty and staff. One would be a generalist who would have some training and experience in guidance and counseling, but he would be accomplished also in a number of fields. An actual example is one of Lake City's present teachers whose area is philosophy and humanities, but who has taught English, composition, literature, social studies, public speaking. He also has taught drafting and is a building construction man. Now as you can see, he would take 40 students and spend at least a year and maybe two years just teaching these students what he knows. For the things that the instructor doesn't know, the instructor would turn them over to subject matter "specialists." A difficulty for a time would be to find generalists in a world geared to narrow areas of knowledge.

The specialist would be one with an advanced degree who has done a lot of work and has a lot of background in a specific subject matter and expertise in audio-visual and other instructional resources.

The third different kind of person of course is the one that is going to provide support services to these groups.

It is easy to see that there would be many matters to be worked out and much opposition to overcome. Some of these are as follows:

1. The general education agreement between the community colleges and the senior institutions might inhibit any plans to institute "managed" learning. Perhaps this would be applicable only in Florida. Even then there is a mechanism for innovative programs.
2. Finding enough "generalists" might be difficult in this age of teacher specialization, as was previously pointed out.
3. It may be difficult to find a sufficient number of teachers who would be willing and/or able to spend the amount of time necessary to carry out the mission. This might well be the greatest hurdle. "Complete immersion" with the students would be required.
4. The accrediting agencies might be difficult to convince that this would be a better method of educating students.

It is the author's belief that the first and fourth barriers could be overcome by setting up an experimental program in which a college took only selected students to the extent to which it had capable "managers." The college would inform the universities and the accrediting association of its intentions, hopefully secure their blessings, and decide after four years (two in the college, two in the upper division) whether or not it is an educationally sound idea. Since the name of Dr. Walker's speech

is "The Next Hundred Years," it may not be so bad to take five years before someone starts or ten years before some institution has in operation a full fledged program of "managed" learning.

Sould the solution mentioned above not be entirely satisfactory, a community college could begin a controlled experiment by using the technique only for elective work.

At any rate, many educators feel that the idea is sound and that details can be worked out by the ingenuity of dedicated college personnel. In fact, the concept is not a great deal different from the things the Lake City Community College teachers are doing on this campus in audio-tutorial instruction, independent study, inter-disciplinary studies. compensatory education, study help labs, and the approach used in directed educational experiences (an experience based upon the inner term concept of the 4-1-4 calendar).

It has been said that it takes fifty years from the time an educational method proves itself to have it generally accepted. Let education reduce this time lag now!

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